



## **Consultation response**

### **Housing Adaptations Service Standards**

#### **Welsh Government**

**December 2018**

#### **Introduction**

Age Cymru is the leading charity working to improve the lives of all older people in Wales. We believe older people should be able to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, have adequate income, access to high quality services and the opportunity to shape their own future. We seek to provide a strong voice for all older people in Wales and to raise awareness of the issues of importance to them.

We are pleased to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on Housing Adaptations Service Standards. Accessible housing is imperative to older people being able to live independently for longer. Older people must be able to live safe, independent and active lives in the setting most appropriate to them, and their home may need to be adapted to meet their changing needs. Adapting homes reduces disability and risk of accident.<sup>[1]</sup> The provision of adaptations can provide a substantial improvement to the quality of life of recipients, by enabling the person to retain autonomy and dignity. In terms of cost effectiveness, adaptations can prevent accident and injury and can present an alternative to residential care.

With reference to Service Standards, we believe that home adaptations must be provided within a reasonable time period to maximise the best possible outcomes in terms of enabling older people to be able to live independently for longer. We believe that the Service Standards must ensure that access to good quality, timely and appropriate adaptations is consistent across all areas of Wales.

Feedback we have received from some older people in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants adaptations, is that people may be restricted to one floor or even one room in their property until the adaptations are finished, which is far from ideal for the service user. We would therefore stress the importance of the Service Standards' ensuring that home adaptations are completed as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Another important issue raised by some older people is the need for service improvements for those people awaiting home adaptations before discharge from hospital. In addition to highlighting the importance of Service Standards in improving the

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<sup>[1]</sup> Welsh Government (2013) The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013 – 2023.

efficiency of the completion of home adaptations, we would stress the importance of collaboration between health and social services in ensuring that older people are not facing unnecessary delays in being discharged from hospital.